

BLACK BEARD.

THE CURSE OF THE COAST.

BY H. B. SCOTT.

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PREFACE.



IN 1831 the Atlantic coast was for several months held in a state of terror by a pirate, who, from the fact that he was always reported by those who laid claim to having seen him as wearing a black beard, became known to the coast as Black Beard.

Though the term, "The curse of the coast," was often applied to him, there is little doubt but that his beard was a false one, and worn only on occasions when he was willing to be recognized as the pirate captain. Undoubtedly he often visited cities and plantations on our southern coast and there laid his plans for a raid, which soon followed.

The fact as related in regard to his kidnapping negroes from plantations of one section and selling them to those of another is traditional. So, also, is the San Domingo episode in which the reader first makes the acquaintance of Black Beard.

He undoubtedly successfully cleaned out the vaults of several banks; despoiled many merchantmen at sea, and held the entire southern coast in terror.

He was a man of more than ordinary intelligence, of Herculean frame, brave and daring, and his craft, a two-mast schooner which not many crafts of Uncle Sam could overhaul, many a time has lain at anchor in the harbor of Wilmington, Charleston, Savannah or Beaufort, while the high seas were being scourged for her and immense rewards were offered for her captain's head.

First, "The Clara Belle," then "The Ranger," then "The William B. Niles," then "The Fisher Boy," always "The Old Clara Belle," but after each trip sailing under a new name and presenting a different appearance.

Tradition says that Black Beard accumulated great wealth, and that all lies to-day, or did lie, at some point on the Atlantic coast frequented by the pirate before he so mysteriously disappeared.

As stated, the coast has been frequently explored by parties in search of this hidden treasure; only last season the swamps of the Altamaha river, Georgia, were scoured by negroes who believed the wealth buried there. I have located it, as well as terminated the career of numerous parties to this tale, at "Smith's Island," near the mouth of the Cape Fear.

Tradition has it, on the Carolina coast, that this island was for a time the rendezvous of the pirate; it has been often dug over in search of the treasure by treasure seekers from Maine to Texas. If buried there, why was not the hidden hoard discovered?

You will know why when you have read the tale.

CHAPTER I.

A COLONIAL RESIDENCE THAT FIGURES IN THIS STORY.

On the bank of the Cape Fear river, and some 30 miles from where it empties its waters into the broad Atlantic, stands the old, old city of Wilmington; so old, in fact, that the building that was the headquarters of Lord Cornwallis when the town (for Wilmington was then a town of no small importance) was occupied by the British soldiery during the revolution of 1776, though still standing (at least as to its frame), has of necessity, as age and inclement weather caused its roof and sides to wear and rot away, been recovered and the frame reclothed with Carolina's pine many times; but beneath the covering of to-day stands the same old frame and in the same location as it stood in the troublous days of the American revolution.

True, the time-worn floors that were pressed in turn by the feet of a Cornwallis and a Washington have been replaced by others, but underneath the sills and girders that supported it rest to-day as staunch and true as a quarter ago, and testify to the endurance of Carolina's pine.

The rooms that in the days of long gone by have echoed alike with the laughter and revelry of British sons and daughters, and the music of Sambo and Cuffy, as they called "all hands round, promenade all!" while the sons and daughters of the Tar Heel state kept time with flying feet, retain their same dimensions.

The misguided Andre and the traitor Arnold have stood within these very rooms.

Here the "Father of his Country" and that patriot from across the sea whose memory is dear to all Americans have conferred together, and as small incidents in the lives of great men live behind them, so many live in Wilmington that are said to have transpired in the lives of Washington and La Fayette.

One small one is, that on a certain occasion "The Father of his Country" one night ordered his coachman to have his carriage and his two bright boys in front of the mansion at dawn of day, as he and La Fayette intended visiting a fort on the river below.

It is said that in the morning when

they approached the carriage that "Honest George," who never told a lie, stroked the back of the bay next him with his hand, and that his glove was soiled. "Pompey! what do you mean, sir, by bringing out my team in a condition like this?"

"There, sir! and there! take that! and that! move quick, take back my team, and use your elbows well, then bring them out. I'd not be captured with a team like that."

"What matters, General," said La Fayette, "they'll be more soiled when they return."

"But by fresh dirt, sir, by fresh dirt—and discipline, Gen. La Fayette, discipline. Sir, if I'd take them now in that condition, I would never get them cleaner. When we are in the field, and with hot work before us, then we will drive dirty horses, but not before."

It was said that one of the pegs dropped out of the toe of one of George's boots on this occasion, and the language that he used was said to have been very impressive; those to whom the tradition has been handed down can hardly reconcile the big, strong words that George used on that occasion with his neck remark when a boy, to his father's question: "Who cut down that tree?"

"I did, papa. I cannot tell a lie." But enough of old traditions. In 1831 this mansion, from which Washington and La Fayette that morning, 55 years before, had ridden, was the property and home of John Loyd, Carolina's wealthiest banker.

Loyd was a widower of 45 years of age, and with his daughter Fannie, a young girl of 17, and a nephew, Herbert Lathrop, of 23, together with servants (who, by the way, were his slaves), occupied the mansion.

Fannie Loyd was a very charming young girl, and would in time be (so it was supposed) her father's heiress. There was, however, a strong bond of affection existing between Fannie and her father, and she desired nothing more than that his life might be long spared.

Herbert, the nephew, was a son of the banker's younger sister; his parents had been dead some years, and they had left him little but the name, bore and poverty, so his uncle had taken him beneath his roof, educated him, and now he was cashier of his bank.

One morning in the early part of February, he was in his accustomed place at the cashier's window, when an apparently middle-aged man advanced to the window: "Good morning, Herbert."

"Good morning, Mr. Hill. Can I do something for you?"

"I wish to see Mr. Loyd, Herbert. Is he in?"

"Certainly—Andrew," to a colored porter, "show Mr. Hill into my uncle's office."

This was soon done.

Mr. Loyd was seated at his desk, writing, as they entered. "Ah, good morning, Squire Hill. I hope I see you well—how goes all at Orton, how is the madam, the fair Clara, and your boys?"

"All well, John, all well—but I called to see you on financial matters to-day; you see, I bought another plantation last year, something like a couple of thousand acres, and that together with the money I paid out for a dozen additional negroes, just about cleaned up my bank account. Present prices don't justify the sale of rice, and I will want to put in this year's crop, and run me through the season."

"Very good, squire, you can have it; the Carolina bank vaults are at your command."

"Thanks, John, thanks, I will probably not want more than \$8,000 or \$10,000—by the way, why don't you come down and see us? Bring the young folks, Clara told me I must be sure and bring Fannie back with me."

"I can't spare her to-day, squire, but we will come down Sunday, with Capt. Harper, on the Sunshine—Andrew, tell Herbert to honor Squire Hill's check for what money he wants—good day, squire."

"Good day, Mr. Loyd, we'll look for you Sunday," and Abner Hill, the owner of Orton, the largest rice plantation in the Carolinas, and 100 negroes, walked out into the bank, drew a check for what money he needed, pocketed the same, and took his departure.

After paying a number of calls to various merchants around town, the planter proceeded to the wharf, and took the steamer to Orton. At the landing he was met by Cudgo, one of his negroes, with a saddle horse, which he mounted and rode home, while Cudgo, with a team, followed on with divers bundles and packages.

The family of Abner Hill consisted of himself and wife, Clarence, the elder son of 23, Thomas, the second son, who was at the military academy of West Point, and an older daughter, Clara, who was 18 years of age.

Abner Hill belonged to one of the old-time families of the state, and his plantation and negroes had largely descended to him from his father, as had they indeed from father to son, for several generations; each adding to the broad acres of the ancestral home, and to the number of slaves, until now many thousands acres were included in the tract, which consisted, on the lowlands of the river, of vast rice fields, which were hemmed in on one side by an

immense dyke that fronted the river for many miles, keeping off the salt water of the Atlantic, which at flood tide would otherwise have converted the fertile fields into an inland sea.

While on the other side, some two miles from the river front, the surface of the earth gradually arose, and for a full mile width was a sloping ridge, which then descended to what would have been a vast plain, but for the fact that here grew in all their grandeur the yellow pines of the Carolinas—rearing their heads aloft, while their green boughs bent beneath the pressure of the sea breeze, which comes moaning, whispering through them, and the words seem to come, waiving from the green treetops:

"Look at our scarred and hacked sides—we are yielding up our life blood year by year. Mingo and Caesar, Pompey and Ben are hacking us to death for the turpentine, the resin and the pitch that we contain—it is our blood! our life blood! and when you have sapped it all, our green boughs will wither—you will then level us to the earth, and saw us into lumber at the mills—even as all die, so die we to satisfy the never ending wants of man."

The Manor house at Orton was a fine residence for the times; it stood on the ridge some 300 yards from the edge of the rice lands. Stretching away to the right was a long row of negro cabins, while to the left stood the barns, stables, carriage houses and rice mill, and over the ridge and on the bank of Orton creek was the sawmill; this same creek supplied the water with which at certain seasons of the year the rice fields were flooded.

Arrived at the house, a waiting negro took the squire's horse, and he strode up on the piazza; at the door he was met by his daughter, a beautiful girl, with large black eyes, and an abundant head of hair, hanging in ringlets clear to her shoulders.

"Oh, father; you did not obey my orders."

"Come here, child, and give your old father a kiss; Loyd and Herbert and Fannie will be down on the Sunshine, Sunday; now tell me, child, which will you be the most pleased to see? my friend, John Loyd, the coy Fannie, or Nephew Herbert? Ah, child, you are a young lady now, and young ladies catch beaux, and beaux catch wives—Ah, Clara!"

"Well, father, I'll never set my net to catch Herbert Lathrop for a beau, and he need never set his to catch me for a wife, for he is a young man I not only dislike but fear; Mr. Loyd is so different. I like him well, and Fannie, she's a treasure. Do you know, papa, I think our Clarence is in love with Fannie."

"So, so. Well then, if Fannie be in love with him, I am well pleased. John Loyd's dollars and these broad acres would go well together; but I would have my daughter make a brilliant match. Remember the lands and slaves of the Hills, with few exceptions, all go to the eldest son. It is following the English custom of our ancestors; true, we generally find an odd penny to dower our daughters with, and the youngest son we make a man of letters, a preacher, or a doctor, or put him in the army. Tom chose the army, and will, I think, in time, do credit to it—but you, my daughter, must marry a man of wealth."

"Abner," said Mrs. Hill, who had joined them, "don't be putting marriage into my daughter's head. I cannot consent to losing her for many years to come."

"Nor shall you, mother," said Clara. "And as for dower," said Sophia Hill, "leave your last penny to your boys. I've money enough and land enough to dower Clara Hill."

"Why, wife, so you have—but wealth's a thing a person can't have too much of."

"I'll not have my daughter wed a money-bag that she does not love and live a life of torture. Let her marry a man, when she does wed, and I'll provide the dower to set them both at ease in life."

"Well said, my wife."

"Don't be afraid, mother, dear. You will not get rid of me for many days to come."

"Any mail to-day, Abner?"

"Yes, a letter from Tom."

"Why do you say Tom when Thomas is his name? Tom is the name of a negro or a cat. I'll not have my boy called Tom. But what said he, Abner?"

"T-h-o-m-a-s is well, and will be home the first of June on three months' leave. But here's the letter, wife."

"There's John Corbett on the lawn. I'm bound he wants something. Where is Clarence?"

"He said it was a good day for fish to bite and he took his gun and rod and went off toward the creek with Uncle Jobe."

Squire Hill passed out on the lawn where the overseer was standing.

"Well, Corbett, anything amiss?"

"No, squire, not much but Uncle Jobe's drowned."

"What! No; and nothing amiss? I should say there was. Jobe will be missed sure. Not for plantation work, I know, for he's too old for that. Why, Jobe was over seventy. He belonged to my father—trotted me on his knee when I was a boy—and now he's drowned. Well! Nothing amiss! I guess if you go and tell his sister, Aunt Dinah, about it, you'll think there's something amiss."

"Mr. Clarence has gone up to tell her."

"I'd sooner him than me, Corbett. Anything else?"

"Angus Brice sent word that he'd be here with the schooner next Wednesday for the turpentine."

"What are you going to do, Corbett, about Uncle Jobe?"

"Why, Clarence says that where he got drowned it's three miles up the creek, nearly to the pond; it's too late to go up to-night, but your son said he'd take some of the hands and go up in the morning and drag for him."

"That's all right, Corbett, if the alligators don't eat him before that time; but, as you say, by the time they could get there to-night it would be so dark among those cypress and pines that they could see nothing. Well, I presume you've got things moving all right, Corbett, so good night."

"Good night, squire."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

MATRIMONY IN INDIA.

Jewelry is the Most Important Factor in the Marriage.

Never during its existence has India been so rich in jewelry as now. The people are always adding to their stock. Savings from nearly all sources are disposed of in this way, and these savings are being constantly made—often at the expense of clothing, sometimes at the expense of greater necessities of life. The making and the storing away of wealth in this form is the national peculiarity of the country.

Jewelry is regarded as the most stable kind of wealth, and fortunes are never counted without estimating the value of the stock of jewelry. It can always be pledged or disposed of. The market for its sale is never closed and never depressed. The most ignorant native who wishes to sell a piece of jewelry knows its market value quite well. He can scarcely be cheated.

Jewelry forms the greatest factor in matrimony. The most lowly bride has her stridham, which is occasionally equal in value to five years' income of the bridegroom. There is often a scarcity of clothing, sometimes a scarcity of cooking pots, generally not a particle of furniture, but nearly always a stock of jewelry. The wife that has no jewelry possesses nothing else; she cannot be robbed. The family that does not have jewelry is absolutely indigent.

One of the greatest boasts of the jewelry owner is that his hoards cannot be taxed. A man may own jewelry valued at a lakh of rupees, and pay no income tax. This is a source of great satisfaction. Jewelry yields no recurring income, but it is prized more than government paper. If it never increases, it never diminishes, is a national saying, common among men and women alike. No native marriage, except among the most impoverished, takes place without a transfer of jewelry, and very frequently of new jewelry.—Detroit Free Press.

A POET'S KINDNESS.

Eugene Field's Way of Helping the Unfortunate.

A story has been going the rounds of the newspapers, which is partly true; but it puts facts in a false light, as stories always do when only half told. It was originally printed several years ago, and ran as follows: Mrs. Field had laid by enough money to pay the quarterly installment upon Mr. Field's life insurance, and she handed him the sum to make the payment. On his way downtown he met a man who had a large collection of butterflies, consisting of 800 specimens, which so fascinated Mr. Field that he forgot all about the life insurance, and immediately purchased the entire collection.

The truth is that Mr. Field did start out to pay for or buy something which was needed, but not to make a life insurance payment. Also, he did meet an old man with a collection of butterflies. The old man was a gentleman he knew, a friend who had lost his wife and two children. Besides, the week before, the house with all its contents had been destroyed by fire. The man was absolutely without means, home, or friends. He happened to have the butterflies left, as at the time of the fire they were in the house of a friend. When Mr. Field returned, he said:

"I did not want the butterflies, but I had to give that poor old man the money, and he would not take it unless I accepted the collection."

It was simply one more instance of the fact that the gentle-hearted poet could not leave a friend in misery while he had the money in his pocket to help him.—Martha Nelson Yenowine, in St. Nicholas.

What the Vatican Contains.

On the whole, the vatican may be divided into seven portions. These are the pontifical residence, the Sistine and Pauline chapels, the picture-galleries, the library, the museums of sculpture and archaeology, the out-buildings, including the barracks of the Swiss guards, and, lastly, the gardens with the pope's casino. Of these the Sistine chapel, the galleries and museums and the library are incomparably the most important. The name "Sistine" is derived from Sixtus IV., as has been said. The library was founded by Nicholas V., whose love of books was almost equal to his passion for building. The galleries are representative of Raphael's work, which predominates to such an extent that the paintings of almost all other artists are of secondary importance, precisely as Michelangelo filled the Sistine chapel with himself. As for the museums, the objects they contain have been accumulated by many popes, but their existence ought, perhaps, to be chiefly attributed to Julius II. and Leo X., the principal representatives of the Rovere and Medici families.—F. Marion Crawford, in Century.

Where Ignorance is Bliss.

Mr. Simpkins—What! Want to get a new maid for Fashion Beach? Why don't you take the one you have?

Mrs. Simpkins—She knows how we live when we're at home.—N. Y. Weekly.

—The Bible societies of the world have printed the whole, or parts of the Scripture, in 412 different languages or dialects.

Silenced.

"What did you mean by starting the story that I was an unbeliever in the Scriptures?" asked the deacon, in great wrath.

"Well, deekin," said the man who had originated the report, "you know you told me that all you said about that boss I bought was as true as Gospel. An' you know how true it was."

"Er—ah," said the deacon.—Indianapolis Journal.

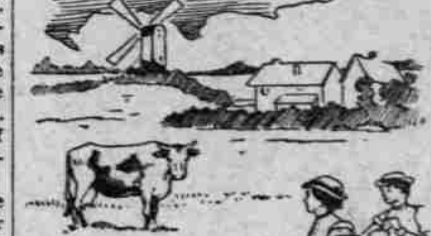
He Didn't Laugh.

"You're a gentleman, sir; I can't say more. Allow me your hand to press! You're the only one of these men a score who didn't laugh when, on the floor, in the whirling dance I tripped, and tore my beautiful partner's dress."

"That I did not laugh is not strange, I say. For the lady's my wife, and her bills I pay."

—Harlem Life.

SOOTHING TREATMENT.



"I'm sure it's angry. You go first, Lucy; you're a vegetarian."—Pick-Me-Up.

As Usual.

He called her a rose.
He called her a pink;
He called her all
That is sweet, I think.
And when they were wed
He let her call
When breakfast was ready
(Just like them all).—Boston Ideas.

Too Good to Live.

Murray Hill—My wife is the best-hearted woman in the world. I don't believe there is another one like her.

Pete Amsterdam—Is that so?

Murray Hill—When she slanders any of her friends she doesn't believe it herself.—N. Y. World.

There Were Others.

"I am proud to say that my grandfather made his mark in the world," observed Mrs. Colonial Dame.

"Well, I guess he wasn't the only man in those days who couldn't write his name," replied Mrs. Lutton.—Tit-Bits.

Appropriate Nomenclature.

"And this beautiful hybrid," continued the enthusiastic floriculturist, "I have named 'The Candidate's Pledge.'"

"Why so?"

"Because it fades so quickly."—Chicago Journal.

The Real Truth.

Though man may boast with lofty frowns,
His wife's old-fashioned state,
He likes to see her hats and gowns
Made strictly up to date.—Chicago Record.

STATIONARY HELP.



Mistress—Didn't you smell this stew burning?

Bridget—Yes'm.

Mistress—Well, goodness gracious! why didn't you take it off?

Bridget—I couldn't reach it from here, mum. Me arrum's not tin foot long.—N. Y. Journal.

The Popular Implement.

Maud has paper-knives in numbers, Bronze and silver, old and new; But when'er she cuts a novel She just makes a hair-pin do.—Chicago Record.

A Sign of Prosperity.

Chatterton—Hardup seems to be having better luck lately.

Wiggins—What? Has he paid you what he owed you?

Chatterton—No; he hasn't called to borrow any more!—Philadelphia Press.

Went Once Too Often.

"Yes, sir," said the convict, "time was when I was admitted to the very best houses."

"And what brought you here?"

"They caught me coming out."—Tit-Bits.

A Wise Precaution.

Start—Never kick a man when he's down.

Dart—And if you kick him when he's down, better see to it that you kick him hard enough to keep him from getting up again.—N. Y. Truth.

Cold Comfort.

"My landlady is very set in her determination not to have any smoking in the dining-room," said Hawkins. "We've never even had a buckwheat cake or a cup of coffee that smoked."—Harlem Life.

Unkind.

He—There is only one time a woman doesn't exaggerate.

She—When is that?

"When she speaks of her age."—N. Y. Kimoa.

Not Exactly an Objection.

He had some doubts as to his standing with the old man.

"Does your father object to my calling?" he asked.

"Well, not exactly," she answered. "He had still further doubts about the subject, but he resolved to know the worst."

"What do you mean by 'not exactly'?" he demanded.

"Well, he says he supposes he ought to be able to stand it if I can," she replied.

He no longer had any doubts, but he didn't feel particularly good about it just the same.—Chicago Post.

His Only Objection.

"I love to hear you talk, my dear," said Mr. Bickers to his wife, when she paused to take breath at the end of the second column of a certain lecture, "but your volubility is really a reflection on my wisdom."

"How so?"

"Because a word to the wise is sufficient."—Demorest's Magazine.

A Solemn Oath.

Amelia—Swear not by the moon, the inconsistent moon.

Augustus—Then what shall I swear by?

Amelia—Swear by that which you hold invaluable; something that you cannot live without.

Augustus—Then, Amelia, I love you! I swear it by my bicycle.—Tit-Bits.

A Vindication.

"I don't understand why you dislike Herbert so," said Mabel to her father.

"I don't think he has any ideas of finance."

"I am sure you wrong him. He is devoted to it. He stopped right in the middle of his proposal to me to ask how your business was getting along."—Washington Star.

Clear.

Little Jack Horner sat in the corner,
Eating a baker's pie;
He stuck in his thumb, and pulled out a plum
(Which proves that the story's a lie).—Philadelphia Press.

RETURNED WITH INTEREST.



She—I want a change, I must have it. Do you think it is interesting to see the same tiresome face day after day?

He—Why on earth do you stand before the mirror all day, then?—Flegende Blaetter.

Another Example.

These methods perverse fate so oft will disclose
That 'tis useless to doubt or to scoff;
It's the girl with the new suit of bicycle clothes
Who at the first mud hole falls off.—Washington Star.

Had Tried Politics.

Great Statesman (to married daughter)—My dear, your husband will never amount to anything if you don't spur him on. Why don't you persuade him to go into politics?

Daughter—But, pa, he has tried, and he can't stand it. The whisky makes him sick.—N. Y. Weekly.

Supply and Demand.

Hostess—What has become of Sandy Smith, who stood so high in your class?

Alumnus—Oh, he's taken orders.

Hostess—He's in the ministry, then?

Alumnus—No; in a restaurant.—Harlem Life.

Ennui.

"We have found out why Nora breaks so much china."

"Why is it?"

"She says she gets so dead tired washing the same old dishes over and over and over."—Detroit Free Press.

Just Sifted Him.

"Don't you think I have a very lovely figure?"

Said a pretty little maiden that I met,
And, remembering she was heiress to a million,
I said her figure suited me, you bet!

—Town Topics.

CRUSHING.



Chollie Softleigh (who is thinking of a friend)—A fool and his money are soon parted.

Miss Cutting—How did you lose it, Mr. Softleigh?—N. Y. Times.

Changed.

"What I so in my husband prize,"
Cried Clara, "is, he is so wise!"
That may be true now, Molly said,
"But how he's changed since you wed!"

—Harlem Life.

Easily Detected.

"Those people next door are still in their honeymoon."

"Have you seen him kissing her?"

"No; but he lets her read the morning paper first."—Chicago Record.